Lesson Fifteen: The Superlative Noun
[اِسْم اَلتَّفْضِيْل]

PRINCIPLE ONE

The *superlative noun* (**اِسْم اَلتَّفْضِيْل**) indicates the *highest degree* or the *comparative* of the quality described by the base letters. For example, the letters **ف–ع–ل** mean "to do" and its *superlative noun* **أَفْعَل** refers to "one who does the most" *or* "one who does more."

PRINCIPLE TWO

The masculine singular of the *superlative noun* is constructed by placing the three base letters on the pattern of **أَفْعَل** (*table 15.1*). For example, replacing the *fā'* (**ف**), *'ain* (**ع**), and *lām* (**ل**) positions in this pattern with **ك–ب–ر** (*to be big*) forms **أَكْبَر** (*a male who is biggest* or *a male who is bigger*). This pattern is *ghair munsarif* (**غَيْر مُنْصَرِف**) and therefore neither permits a double vowel [*tanwīn*] nor a single *kasrah* on its last letter.

PRINCIPLE THREE

The masculine form of the *superlative noun* uses the standard dual, and it uses both the sound plural and the broken plural (*table 15.1*). The broken plural of the masculine *superlative* is *ghair munsarif* (**غَيْر مُنْصَرِف**).

PRINCIPLE FOUR

The feminine form of the *superlative noun* is constructed by placing the three base letters on the pattern of **فُعْلَىْ**.[34] For example, replacing the *fā'* (**ف**), *'ain* (**ع**), and *lām* (**ل**) positions in this pattern with **ك–ب–ر** (*to be big*) forms **كُبْرَىْ** (*a female who is biggest* or *a female who is bigger*).This form undergoes changes in *grammatical states* without reflecting a change at the

---

[34] Although the final letter of this word resembles a *ya'*, it is an '*alif maqsurah*. This letter, like the standard '*alif*, causes extension of the letter before it. Thus, the feminine form of the *superlative noun* is pronounced *fu'lā*.

end of the word. Therefore, the pattern of the word is the same for all three *grammatical state*s (*table 15.2*).

PRINCIPLE FIVE

The feminine form of the *superlative noun* uses the standard dual, and it uses both the sound plural and the broken plural (*table 15.2*).

ESSENTIAL NOTE

The conjugations of the *superlative noun* must be memorized (*tables 15.1 and 15.2*) before moving to the next lesson.

TABLE 15.1

THE MASCULINE *SUPERLATIVE* NOUN

MASCULINE				
BROKEN PLURAL	**SOUND PLURAL**	**DUAL**	**SINGULAR**	
أَفَاعِلُ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلُوْنَ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلاَنِ two males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلُ a male who does more (*or* the most)	رَفْع
أَفَاعِلَ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلِيْنَ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلَيْنِ two males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلَ a male who does more (*or* the most)	نَصْب
أَفَاعِلَ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلِيْنَ males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلَيْنِ two males who do more (*or* the most)	أَفْعَلَ a male who does more (*or* the most)	جَرّ

TABLE 15.2

THE FEMININE *SUPERLATIVE* NOUN

FEMININE				
BROKEN PLURAL	**SOUND PLURAL**	**DUAL**	**SINGULAR**	
فُعَلٌ females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَاتٌ females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَانِ two females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَىْ a female who does more (*or* the most)	رَفْع
فُعَلاً females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَاتٍ females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَيْنِ two females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَىْ a female who does more (*or* the most)	نَصْب
فُعَلٍ females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَاتٍ females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَيَيْنِ two females who do more (*or* the most)	فُعْلَىْ a female who does more (*or* the most)	جَرّ